

11/9/4 (Item 3 from file: 15)
DIALOG(R)File 15:ABI/Inform(R)
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01846909 04-97900

Back end to the Web

Hibbard, Justin

Informationweek n733 PP: 123 May 10, 1999 ISSN: 8750-6874 JRNL CODE:
IWK

DOC TYPE: Journal article LANGUAGE: English LENGTH: 1 Pages

WORD COUNT: 259

ABSTRACT: InfoSpinner Inc. last week released an upgrade to its ForeSite host-to-Web middleware, recasting it as a Web application server. ForeSite 3.0 enhances the product's ability to **convert mainframe data** to Web pages with support for the **Extensible Markup** Language, message-oriented middleware, and Java servlets.

TEXT: Headnote:

ForeSite upgrade supports XML, Java

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"Their biggest challenge is overcoming the fact that they've had mainly an OEM approach," says John Singer, an analyst at Meta Group. As a standalone product, ForeSite 3.0 is still catching up to other app servers. For example, it lacks support for Enterprise JavaBeans. But, Singer adds, its strength is its connections to back-end systems.

That's what attracted the Alaska Department of Fish and Game to an earlier version of ForeSite for its Web site, which provides information about salmon runs to fishers and environmentalists. The department's biologists track fish populations with a custom Oracle client-server application inaccessible to outsiders. Programmers linked the Oracle app to ForeSite by entering SQL queries in a Web-page template. "Now, people can get online and get information immediately," says Carmine DiCostanzo, the department's chief of computer services.

ForeSite 3.0 is available immediately, starting at \$25,000.

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COMPANY NAMES:

Infospinner Inc

GEOGRAPHIC NAMES: US

DESCRIPTORS: Product introduction; Software upgrading; Micro to mainframe links; World Wide Web

CLASSIFICATION CODES: 9190 (CN=United States); 9000 (CN=Short Article);
9120 (CN=Product specific); 5240 (CN=Software & systems)

11/9/16 (Item 4 from file: 16)
DIALOG(R)File 16:Gale Group PROMT(R)
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06568005 Supplier Number: 55466538 (THIS IS THE FULLTEXT)
Intraware Expands XML Product Portfolio With Vervet Logic's XML Pro.
PR Newswire, p1378

August 17, 1999

Language: English Record Type: Fulltext

Document Type: Newswire; Trade

Word Count: 824

TEXT:

Intraware's Online Software Purchasing and Delivery Service -
Intraware.shop

Expands E-Business Applications Offerings

ORINDA, Calif., Aug. 17 /PRNewswire/ -- Intraware, Inc., (Nasdaq: ITRA) the leading provider of Internet-based services for IT professionals, today announced a relationship with Vervet Logic that provides intraware.shop -- Intraware's online software purchasing and delivery service -- customers with online sales, downloadable demos and electronic software delivery of Vervet Logic's popular Extensible Markup Language (XML) Pro v2.0, editor. Vervet Logic's industry leading **XML** editor allows companies to easily parse, query, **transform** and map **XML** bi-directionally with ERP applications, ecommerce applications, **databases** and **legacy** systems. This relationship underscores both companies' commitment to expanding the adoption of XML, which is recognized as one of the fastest growing technologies for business related software, and a core component of Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) and business-to-business ecommerce.

Vervet Logic's XML Pro is one of the industry's leading products that enable IT managers to build complete in-house XML solutions for data management and interchange. With today's agreement, Intraware is providing Vervet Logic with a powerful web-based channel that offers IT professionals a comprehensive resource center to meet their XML information and product requirements. Through its online Try-and-Buy program and Demo Center, intraware.shop helps IT professionals evaluate and purchase XML products more efficiently. Additionally, Intraware's Everything XML Web page (<http://www.intraware.com/xml/index.html>), aggregates the most in-depth and up-to-date information and analysis of XML technology.

"As the XML market expands with vendors such as IBM, Sun, Oracle and Microsoft starting to debut solutions based on XML, we feel that it is a tremendous asset to establish a partnership with Intraware which specializes in XML and has been involved with XML from the early adopter phase," said David Gulbransen, president and CEO of Vervet Logic. "Vervet Logic's goal in partnering with Intraware is to reach more corporate customers -- the IT leaders making technology decisions -- and to put our software in their hands. This strategic relationship with Intraware will provide Vervet with a comprehensive marketing and sales channel to drive revenue and extend our current business initiatives."

"This strategic relationship with Vervet Logic represents another important step in extending Intraware's role as one of the industry's leading resources for XML technology information and product offerings," said Katy Keim, vice president of intraware.shop. "By adding Vervet Logic's XML Pro V2.0 to intraware.shop's XML product portfolio, we are clearly a de facto 'go to' site for any IT professional researching, evaluating or purchasing XML technology."

About Vervet Logic's XML Pro:

XML Pro is a leading tool for XML content creation, offering the features of an advanced XML editor with an intuitive interface that allows XML experts and novices alike to create valid, well formed XML documents. XML Pro provides the quick, functional editing solution missing from many high-end packages. It features the IBM XML4J parser, offering solid support for the W3C Document Object Model and the SAX interface. Using the IBM parser, XML Pro integrates well with customized XML solutions for the enterprise.

Pricing and Availability:

Vervet Logic's XML Pro v2.0 is priced at \$149.95 and is available

immediately from the intraware.shop service at
<http://www.intraware.com/shop>.

About Vervet Logic

Vervet Logic is an XML tools development company located in the digital cornfields of Bloomington, Indiana. Located in the heart of the Indiana University Research Park, Vervet prides itself on reliable, well architected tools for the information age and on providing superb customer support. XML Pro is the first in a line of flagship XML products forming a complete toolbox for XML development and implementation. Information about Vervet Logic is available on the Worldwide Web at <http://www.vervet.com>.

About Intraware

Intraware, Inc. is the leading online provider of business software and services for the IT community. The company enables IT professionals worldwide to efficiently and cost-effectively research, evaluate, purchase, download, and update business-class software online. As a business-to-business ecommerce company, Intraware provides software through its premier online purchasing service, intraware.shop; comprehensive IT information and interactive research services through the Intraware IT Knowledge Center; and software update management services through Intraware SubscribNet.

Intraware's unique spectrum of innovative Internet-based services has attracted strategic relationships with industry-leading vendors including Netscape Communications, Informix, Sun Microsystems, Infoseek, Sybase, PeopleSoft, Allaire, Bluestone Software, Vignette, and RealNetworks. Intraware is a publicly held company with headquarters located at 25 Orinda Way, Orinda, California 94563; 925-253-4500; FAX 925-253-4599; <http://www.intraware.com>.

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CONTACT: Carole Sinclair of Intraware, Inc., 925-253-6707, or carole@intraware.com; or Fiona Hughes of Dave' & Bairey Communications, 925-672-9547, or fiona@dbcomm.com, for Intraware, Inc.; or David Gulbransen, President and CEO of Vervet Logic, 812-856-5270, or david@vervet.com.

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PUBLISHER NAME: PR Newswire Association, Inc.

COMPANY NAMES: *Intraware Inc.; Vervet Logic

EVENT NAMES: *380 (Strategic alliances)

GEOGRAPHIC NAMES: *1USA (United States)

PRODUCT NAMES: *7372680 (Internet Software)

INDUSTRY NAMES: BUS (Business, General); BUSN (Any type of business)

SIC CODES: 7372 (Prepackaged software)

NAICS CODES: 51121 (Software Publishers)

TICKER SYMBOLS: ITRA

SPECIAL FEATURES: COMPANY

11/9/21 (Item 9 from file: 16)
DIALOG(R) File 16:Gale Group PROMT(R)
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06417582 Supplier Number: 54909297 (THIS IS THE FULLTEXT)

Vertex Industries Announces XML Interface to IBM MQ Series.

Business Wire, p1128

June 17, 1999

Language: English Record Type: Fulltext

Document Type: Newswire; Trade

Word Count: 281

TEXT:

CLIFTON, N.J.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--June 17, 1999--

Vertex Industries, Inc. (OTCBB: VETX) has announced plans to release a new component of its evolve suite of next generation middleware tools.

The module, named Vixen, provides the means to **translate** and **transform** messages between **XML** documents and **legacy data** structures. Evolve leverages **XML** technology and its cross platform functionality to exchange data between applications running in heterogeneous environments. Using the information contained in C headers and COBOL workbooks, self describing messages are created that can be used by applications running in the different environments.

VIXEN currently utilizes NetWeave Middleware and IBM MQ-Series as the pathway to transport the messages between platforms. Microsoft's Message Queue (MSMQ) will be added to integrate with COM+ later this year.

Vixen has been integrated with BEA's Weblogic 4.0 and Netscape's Application Server using Enterprise Java Beans to translate and transform data to a message structure usable by legacy systems and distributed applications.

"The convergence of XML and EJB within our suite of middleware products extends the reach of enterprise applications to the Internet and to the virtual work space where both e-commerce and enterprise computing are rapidly coming of age," said Vertex President Ron Byer.

The evolve suite of middleware products provides cross platform support for virtually every popular legacy platform and workstation operation system including HP Unix, IBM, Tandem, Windows NT and Linux.

Vertex Industries, Inc. is a systems integration and middleware solutions provider that offers turnkey automated data collection solutions and middleware support for the seamless connection of distributed applications. Vertex customers include AT&T, Bell Atlantic, MCI, Credit Lyonnais, Dell Computer, Tenneco Packaging, The U.S. Navy and the New Zealand Stock Exchange.

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PUBLISHER NAME: Business Wire

COMPANY NAMES: *Vertex Industries Inc.

GEOGRAPHIC NAMES: *1USA (United States)

PRODUCT NAMES: *3533000 (Oilfield Machinery)

INDUSTRY NAMES: BUS (Business, General); BUSN (Any type of business)

SIC CODES: 3533 (Oil and gas field machinery)

NAICS CODES: 333132 (Oil and Gas Field Machinery and Equipment Manufacturing)

SPECIAL FEATURES: LOB; COMPANY

DIALOG(R)File 9:Business & Industry(R)
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2457230 Supplier Number: 02457230 (THIS IS THE FULLTEXT)
Back End To The Web -- Foresite Upgrade Supports XML, Java
(InfoSpinner Inc released an upgrade to its ForeSite host-to-Web middleware
called ForeSite 3.0)
Information Week, p 123
May 10, 1999
DOCUMENT TYPE: Journal ISSN: 8750-6874 (United States)
LANGUAGE: English RECORD TYPE: Fulltext
WORD COUNT: 259

TEXT:
By: Justin Hibbard

InfoSpinner Inc. last week released an upgrade to its ForeSite host-to-Web middleware, recasting it as a Web application server. ForeSite 3.0 enhances the product's ability to convert mainframe data to Web pages with support for the Extensible Markup Language, message-oriented middleware, and Java servlets.

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ForeSite 3.0 is available immediately, starting at \$25,000.
May 10, 1999

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COMPANY NAMES: INFOSPINNER INC
INDUSTRY NAMES: Software
PRODUCT NAMES: Development support software packages (737224)
CONCEPT TERMS: All product and service information; Product introduction
GEOGRAPHIC NAMES: North America (NOAX); United States (USA)
?

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05524994 Supplier Number: 48374002 (THIS IS THE FULLTEXT)

DataChannel Announces the DataChannel XML Development Kit - Professional

PR Newswire, p0323SFM054

March 23, 1998

Language: English Record Type: Fulltext

Document Type: Newswire; Trade

Word Count: 799

TEXT:

First Enterprise Development Tool to Integrate Databases, Legacy Systems
And Business-to-Business Transactions Over the Web Using XML

SEATTLE, March 23 /PRNewswire/ -- Today at XML: The Conference, DataChannel announced the immediate availability of the DataChannel XML Development Kit - Professional. The professional edition expands on the DataChannel XML Development Toolkit through the addition of DataChannel RIO and DataChannel RIO APIs. The DataChannel XML Development Kit - Professional offers software developers all the components needed for developing the next generation of Web-enabled XML software.

"DataChannel is pleased to provide corporate developers with a simple-to-use XML development system that integrates directly into the existing infrastructure of their companies," said David Pool, CEO and president of DataChannel, Inc. "This toolkit will provide corporate developers the ability to easily build and deploy enterprise Web-enabled software without having to worry about creating XML software themselves."

Benefits and features of the DataChannel XML Development Kit - Professional include:

- * Meta-Content (XML) routing with DataChannel RIO - DataChannel RIO provides the foremost XML data router by creating the infrastructure for publishing, organizing, and distributing content within a corporate Intranet. Based on individual and group profiles, data, such as XML, can be routed to employees within a corporation and outside of a corporation allowing for peer-to-peer interactions and business-to-business transactions.

- * "Save to the Web(TM)" an HTTP-based file system for the Web based on XML- With DataChannel "Save to the Web(TM)" capabilities, users are able to save any content directly to any Web server from any Windows applications. "Save to the Web(TM)" eliminates the need for an Intranet Webmaster.

- * DataBase Driven XML Server - DataChannel RIO provides the industry's foremost XML server with the added stability and flexibility of a database driven engine. DataChannel RIO's built-in directory integration also allows for enhanced security and personalization.

- * DataChannel RIO APIs -- The DataChannel RIO APIs for XML, Java and COM allow developers to seamlessly integrate DataChannel RIO into existing infrastructures and/or new development applications. This makes DataChannel RIO the best fit for business-to-business applications.

- * XML creation with the DataChannel W3C DOM module -- The Document Object Module (DOM) is a standard interface for interacting with a XML document. The DOM is currently under development by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C).

- * XML parsing through the DataChannel XML Parser -- The XML parser allows corporate developers to integrate their real-world applications with XML. The DataChannel XML Parser now supports the SAX and DOM interface.

- * Legacy integration through the template-driven DataChannel XML Generator -- The XML Generator integrates legacy data by converting comma-delimited data records to XML.

The DataChannel XML Developers Kit - Professional also includes the features of the existing development kit including Pax Syntactica, the DataChannel XML viewer, and the CDF Viewer demo.

Pricing & Availability

DataChannel XML Development Kit - Professional is immediately available for download at <http://www.datachannel.com> or by contacting sales@datachannel.com. The DataChannel XML Development Kit is available for free download at <http://www.datachannel.com>. Pricing will free for registered users of DataChannel RIO. Technical support will be provided via telephone at 425-462-1999, ext.400, or via e-mail at support@datachannel.com

About DataChannel Inc.

DataChannel Inc., based in Bellevue, Washington, is the leader in Active Content Technologies. Founded in 1996, DataChannel focuses on development of XML-enabled Active Content Technologies, an emerging class of applications that use XML (Extensible Markup Language) to deliver active content to all levels of networked computing (desktop, server, Internet, intranet, extranet, VPNs, LANs, WANs). DataChannel's flagship product, DataChannel RIO, combines the power of an XML-driven database engine with real-time TIBCO notification [Nasdaq: RTRSY] working with Netscape's Communicator [Nasdaq: NSCP] or Microsoft Active Channel content [Nasdaq: MSFT]. DataChannel RIO, simplifies the process of delivering critical information to the right people at the right time through the instant distribution of organized content including external newsfeeds such as Data Broadcasting Corp. [Nasdaq: DBCC], Desktop Data [Nasdaq: DTOP], and Individual [Nasdaq: INDV]; search engines such as Yahoo!, Excite [Nasdaq: XCIT], InfoSeek [Nasdaq: SEEK], and Lycos [Nasdaq: LCOS]; relational databases from companies such as Informix Software [Nasdaq: IFMX], Sybase [Nasdaq: SYBS], and Oracle [Nasdaq: ORCL]; PC application provide by vendors such as SAP [DTB: 320928], PeopleSoft [Nasdaq: PSFT], and Baan [Nasdaq: BAANF]; and enterprise corporate data from companies such as Wall Data [Nasdaq: WALL] and IBM (NYSE: IBM).

Additional information about DataChannel, Inc. and its products can be found at www.datachannel.com.

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03/23/98

/CONTACT: Valerie Chan of DataChannel Inc., 425-462-1999, or fax, 425-637-1192, or valerie@datachannel.com/

/Company News On-Call: <http://www.prnewswire.com> or fax, 800-758-5804, ext. 115568/

/Web site: <http://www.datachannel.com/>

CO: DataChannel
ST: Washington
IN: CPR
SU: PDT

ZB-SM

-- SFM054 --

2032 03/23/98 11:37 EST <http://www.prnewswire.com>

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PUBLISHER NAME: PR Newswire Association, Inc.

COMPANY NAMES: *DataChannel Inc.

EVENT NAMES: *336 (Product introduction)

GEOGRAPHIC NAMES: *1USA (United States)

PRODUCT NAMES: *7372513 (Application Development Software)

INDUSTRY NAMES: BUS (Business, General); BUSN (Any type of business)

NAICS CODES: 51121 (Software Publishers)

SPECIAL FEATURES: COMPANY

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06161279 Supplier Number: 53975667 (THIS IS THE FULLTEXT)
****XML** **Tools** Can **Unlock** Access To Legacy Data. (Technology
Information) (Column)**

Morgenthal, JP
InternetWeek, p18(1)
March 1, 1999

ISSN: 1096-9969

Language: English Record Type: Fulltext

Article Type: Column

Document Type: Newsletter; Trade

Word Count: 408

TEXT:

A recent examination of products that support repurposing of legacy data trapped behind 3270 and 5250 data streams revealed a noticeable shortcoming--none of these products supports translation to XML data formats. Granted, XML has only recently been introduced, but it seems that these groups are missing a great opportunity.

There are some good products that facilitate repurposing of legacy data. Computer Associates' OPAL, CST Inc.'s Jacada and Innovator, Planetnetworks' Interspace and Wall Data's Cyberprise Host all offer tools for moving data between legacy terminal environments and newly fashioned client applications. Indeed, most of these tools even support the new generation of client applications that further simplify accessing legacy applications over the Internet.

The vendors of these tools have a significant understanding of the format of the terminal data streams, as well as the screen format and configuration files used in the native environment. These vendors' tools leverage this information to generate new clients that are supported in Visual Basic, Java and Web browsers. In many cases, this meets the demands of customers who only wanted to move away from the proprietary terminal world to low-cost PCs.

However, the migration away from terminal environments is well under way, and these customers are slowly joining users that need to extend this information outside the enterprise, across the Internet and into the systems of their partners, suppliers and customers. Leveraging existing data and applications as terminal streams and converting them to and from XML seems like an excellent solution for moving ahead in the age of digital commerce without risking further opportunities because of Y2K concerns.

Of note, this does not preclude users from accessing their legacy data as XML data, but it does require these users to build the translations themselves. All the above products offer an interface through which users can access the transformed data buffer before it is delivered to the client. These interfaces will allow companies to utilize existing products to cull data from terminal-based applications and render them into XML, as well as update applications based upon returned XML-based messages. Users should realize that performing this on an application-by-application basis is time-consuming and possibly error prone. It is clearly a function that is best performed by the tools that support legacy data repurposing.

JP Morgenthal is president of NC.Focus, which provides strategic planning, analysis and consulting for integration technologies. He can be reached at jp@ncfocus.com.

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PUBLISHER NAME: CMP Media, Inc.

EVENT NAMES: *260 (General services)

GEOGRAPHIC NAMES: *1USA (United States)

PRODUCT NAMES: *3573021 (Management Information Systems (Computers))

INDUSTRY NAMES: BUSN (Any type of business); TELC (Telecommunications)

NAICS CODES: 334111 (Electronic Computer Manufacturing)

DIALOG(R) File 16:Gale Group PROMT(R)
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06263000 Supplier Number: 54341641 (THIS IS THE FULLTEXT)
**BlueGill Technologies Harnesses XML to Bridge Information Gap and Bolster
Customer Relationships.**

PR Newswire, p7968

April 12, 1999

Language: English Record Type: Fulltext

Document Type: Newswire; Trade

Word Count: 656

TEXT:

The BlueGill i-Series Improves Customer Loyalty and Increases Customer
Retention by Transforming Legacy Data into Interactive Web
Applications

ANN ARBOR, Mich., April 12 /PRNewswire/ -- BlueGill Technologies, the industry pioneer in electronic bill presentment and payment (EBPP) software, today announces the BlueGill i-Series(TM), a set of Web-based software applications and tools that enable companies to transform legacy data, such as billing, statements and business to business communications, into interactive customer applications (ICA). The i-Series assists companies in improving customer loyalty, increasing customer retention and building market share in the new Internet economy.

"With the i-Series, we've combined our technology and experience to create new interactive software products with unique functionality for specific vertical markets the first set of interactive applications that provide customers with online access to account information, product offerings and value-added services," said Hal Davis, president and CEO of BlueGill Technologies, Inc. "The i-Series transforms legacy data into a mutually beneficial online dialogue between companies and their customers, resulting in increased revenues and customer satisfaction."

The BlueGill i-Series consists of five Web-based software applications, including i-Banker, i-Broker, i-Biller, i-Telco, and i-Insurance, and is packaged around BlueGill's experience in implementing interactive, customized communications and transactions between businesses and customers in several different industry segments. While many of these implementations were for consumer EBPP, BlueGill has also implemented several other applications outside of EBPP, including telco business-to-business communications, manufacturing applications (EDI RFQ response), insurance administration and online investment statement applications.

How the BlueGill i-Series Works

With the BlueGill Engine, the i-Series combines a modular set of industry specific functions for billing management, business-to-business bills, statements, payment linkage, administration, e-commerce, customer service and marketing, and data management. The BlueGill Engine manages the transition of legacy data into XML-based "Smart Objects," by transforming the data into an object model and storing it as an XML construct. BlueGill Smart Objects are used to transform customer data into interactive applications, creating a customized, flexible business application based on BlueGill's experience in each of the industries it targets.

According to Gartner Group analyst Avivah Litan, "BlueGill's XML-based technology, proven performance, and industry specific expertise puts the i-Series ahead of its competitors for billers seeking a scalable platform that can manage ebilling functions directly or via APIs to other applications."

"XML allows very complex data to be portable, while object architecture makes our solutions inherently scalable, with high performance," added Davis. The BlueGill i-Series also sports a new graphical user interface (GUI) called the BG SmartXpress, which simplifies the generation of XML Smart Objects, data extraction, and the building of statement definitions. "With the addition of our new GUI, the task of preparing legacy data for the Web has been simplified to a point-and-click procedure, dramatically reducing the set-up process," said Davis.

Each interactive customer application in the BlueGill i-Series uses the BlueGill Engine and includes tools, modules, reusable objects, applications and partner solutions. For example, the i-Biller application comprises the BlueGill Engine, a new module for managing large

business-to-business bills, a billing analysis tool, linkage to BlueGill aggregation and payment partners TransPoint and CheckFree, and a set of customizable billing templates. This business-to-business module provides the unique ability to transform a single massive bill or statement into cost centers or departmental components for distribution and access in a high-performance environment.

Other BlueGill i-Series applications are similarly configured with functionality derived from BlueGill's experience within each industry segment. These applications may then be customized using popular Web development tools and applications from one of BlueGill's technology partners such as IBM or Netscape.

About BlueGill

Founded in 1996, BlueGill Technologies pioneered EBPP with its 1to1 Server product, and today is an international software development company with business solutions that enable companies to transform legacy systems into interactive Web applications for managing customer relationships. BlueGill software is installed today at financial service institutions, telecommunications companies, utilities and service bureaus in North America and Europe. The company is on the Internet at www.bluegill.com.

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PUBLISHER NAME: PR Newswire Association, Inc.

COMPANY NAMES: *BlueGill Technologies Inc.

PRODUCT NAMES: *7372415 (Human Resources Management Software); 7372640 (Electronic Commerce Software)

INDUSTRY NAMES: BUS (Business, General); BUSN (Any type of business)

SIC CODES: 7372 (Prepackaged software)

NAICS CODES: 51121 (Software Publishers)

SPECIAL FEATURES: COMPANY

11/9/5 (Item 4 from file: 15)
DIALOG(R) File 15:ABI/Inform(R)
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01843968 04-94959

XML gains ground

Hibbard, Justin

Informationweek n725 PP: 18-19 Mar 15, 1999 ISSN: 8750-6874

JRNL CODE: IWK

DOC TYPE: Journal article LANGUAGE: English LENGTH: 2 Pages

WORD COUNT: 1213

ABSTRACT: Nearly every major software company is pledging support for the Extensible Markup Language (XML). XML makes it possible to create mark-up languages for specific purposes, such as formatting a purchase order for an autoparts supplier. Sun Microsystems plans to build an extension to Java that will let the language pass data back and forth with XML. XML can save from 30% to 60% of the cost of distributing data. Microsoft is working to enhance the functionality of XML applications with a new XML engine that ships this week with Internet Explorer 5.0. IBM last week released Xena, a visual interface for creating XML documents and vocabularies. By the end of the month, it will release an XML Parser for C++, which helps developers parse, process, and create XML documents.

TEXT: Headnote:

Vendors pledge support as XML stands poised to become a universal format for data exchange

The Extensible Markup Language, which started as a better way to build a Web page, is emerging as a universal format for exchanging data between applications and among businesses. Nearly every major software company is pledging support for XML, and a growing number of IT shops are using it to integrate disparate data sources.

Increasing vendor activity adds momentum to XML, a set of rules for defining data structures. Microsoft this week will release its most advanced XML engine yet as part of its Internet Explorer 5.0 browser. Last week, Sun Microsystems said it will develop a standard XML extension to its Java programming language, while Netscape said it will add XML support to its E-commerce applications.

Is the emerging standard ready for widespread adoption? Some users think so. "XML is one of the fundamental building blocks of the future application development environment," says Dennis Walsh, chief information technology officer at General Motors. "There's no question that XML is a standard for common data exchange," says Ben Meiry, director of collaboration infrastructure at Merrill Lynch. "We view it as an important strategic direction."

XML emerged because developers wanted to extend the capabilities of HTML, the original language of the Web. XML makes it possible to create mark-up languages for specific purposes, such as **formatting** a purchase order for an autoparts supplier.

GM is using XML to make **legacy data** available to Web browsers. The automaker uses an XML server application from Datachannel Corp. to pull data from many sources, such as Oracle and IBM databases on Unix servers. The product, called Rio, formats the data in XML, transforms the XML into Web pages, and serves the pages to browsers. Users get data from multiple sources in one interface, and developers needn't alter legacy applications or reformat data.

GM is using Datachannel's technology in its engineering and quality-assurance applications and will test it in other areas of the company later this year. Because Rio is written in Java, the automaker can use it on almost any operating system. Both Java and XML are platformindependent and use HTTP to move data across networks. The technologies are complementary in that XML formats data and Java processes

.. it. "The combination of XML and Java is very powerful," Walsh says. That power isn't lost on Sun, which plans to build an extension to Java that will let the language pass data back and forth with XML: Sun's XML extension will conform to XML document formatting standards developed by the World Wide Web Consortium and the Simple API for XML (SAX), a popular JavaXML interface developed by members of an Internet E-mail list.

Sun hopes its Java extension will make more developers comfortable with using SAX. "With a standard extension, companies will have the security that the SAX interface will be part of the Java platform permanently, and it will give them security in using it," says J.P. Morgenthal, an analyst at N.C. Focus, a research firm. Sun expects a specification for the extension to be ready in three to six months. Once it's done, Sun will release it as an add-on to its Java virtual machine.

Users look to XML to solve a variety of problems. Merrill Lynch uses it as a packaging mechanism for distributing software to PCs. Later this year, it will begin using XML to distribute news and financial data to desktop systems. The brokerage is also experimenting with using XML to distribute data to handheld devices such as 3Com Palm Pilots.

As an all-purpose data-distribution mechanism, XML can have an impact on the bottom line. "XML can save from 30% to 60% of the cost of distributing data," says Meiry. "The cost savings, performance gains, and scope of feature enhancements that you can roll out [using XML] can be so dramatic as to really make senior people take notice."

(Photograph Omitted)

Captioned as: Savings: Using XML to distribute data will help Merrill Lynch's bottom line, says Mein.

However, Merrill Lynch is wary of XML's performance in one area: handling real-time information. "It's not optimal for large amounts of real-time data," says Meiry. For that reason, Merrill Lynch is holding back in using XML in applications that involve real-time stock quotes.

Meanwhile, some vendors are putting a lot of effort behind improving XML. Microsoft is working to enhance the functionality of XML applications with a new XML engine that ships this week with Internet Explorer 5.0. The engine will also be a standard feature of Windows 2000 server and desktop editions.

What's more, Microsoft's XML engine will play a key role in supporting BizTalk, a framework for XML apps Microsoft introduced this month. BizTalk is a set of XML document formats that industry groups can extend to meet their particular needs. Microsoft plans to work with standards bodies in manufacturing, health care, insurance, and other industries to define formats. The software maker will support the formats in its BizTalk Server, due for release two to three months after Windows 2000 ships later this year. The formats will be published, allowing other vendors to support them as well.

Vendors that specialize in enterprise application integration are recognizing XML's potential as a standard in their business. Tempest Software Inc. uses XML in its Tempest Messenger System to facilitate data exchange between applications in multiple companies. "XML is a hub language," says Francis Cianfrocca, the New York company's cofounder and chairman. "It gives you a unified way to express things."

That unified view is what Dun & Bradstreet Corp. needs. XML is at the core of the company's globalaccess system, which lets customers access many sources of data about the credit status of companies around the world. D&B built adapters that format data on its host systems in XML. B2B Integration Server from webMethods Inc. presents that data to customers via the Internet. About 25 companies currently access D&B's data this way, but that number is expected to increase by year's end as D&B starts using XML to send data to ERP systems. "The goal is to provide one-and only one-access

• system to represent Dun & Bradstreet data" on the Internet, says Tom Gwydir, the company's project director for Internet development. "The only way to do that is XML."

IBM is stepping up to its customers' interest in XML. The company last week released Xena, a visual interface for creating XML documents and vocabularies. By the end of the month, it will release an XML Parser for C++, which helps developers parse, process, and create XML documents.

IBM also has plans for XML beyond development tools. This summer, the company will release a version of its DB2 database that stores, indexes, searches, and retrieves XML documents. In September, IBM will release a version of its MQSeries messaging-oriented middleware that connects XML and legacy messages. IBM also plans to add XML support to all its operating systems and processors and offer XML consulting through its services division. "We're very serious about XML," says Marie Wieck, director of technology in the network computing software division at IBM.

The increasing momentum behind XML means users can be serious about it now, too.

Footnote:

More on XML from InternetWeek and InformationWeek: ui.informationweek.com/725/xml.htm

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COMPANY NAMES:

Microsoft Corp (DUNS:08-146-6849 TICKER:MSFT)

Sun Microsystems Inc (DUNS:01-304-4532 TICKER:SUNW)

General Motors Corp (DUNS:00-535-6613 TICKER:GM)

Merrill Lynch & Co (DUNS:06-496-8043 TICKER:MER)

IBM Corp (DUNS:00-136-8083 TICKER:IBM)

GEOGRAPHIC NAMES: US

DESCRIPTORS: Extensible Markup Language; Product introduction; Compatible software; Technological planning

CLASSIFICATION CODES: 9190 (CN=United States); 5240 (CN=Software & systems); 9120 (CN=Product specific); 5220 (CN=Data processing management)